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RACE AND MOOD: DISPARITIES BETWEEN DIAGNOSIS AND DEPRESSION SCORES

Previous research on race and depression has often demonstrated differing rates of depression for people who identify as black and latinx compared to whites (Riolo, Nguyen, Greden, and King, 2005). These findings are interpretable in terms of the history of prejudice and racism and may also reflect differing levels of access to mental health care. The current study sought to replicate this finding in a college sample, hypothesizing black and latinx students will report higher levels of depression. The relationship between race, depression scores, and self-diagnosis, and medication usage for depression was also explored. In the study the Zung Depression Inventory was administered anonymously to 854 students who were also asked if they have ever suffered from depression. Students were offered extra credit for their participation in the anonymous study and data was gathered online using Qualtrix. Data was analyzed using SPSS. An Anova test revealed significant differences in the depression levels of black and latinx compared to white undergraduates. A significant difference in the percentage of people who self-report having depression as a function of race was also found. In this sample, black and latinx students had higher average depression scores and were also more likely to meet the criteria for depression. However, black and latinx students were no more likely to identify themselves as having suffered from depression. Reasons why students of color experience greater levels of depression are explored. The disparity between objective mood scores and self-labeling is discussed. These findings have important implications for college counseling centers in supporting students of color.